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Schools are political in that they are creatures of the state and are supported by tax monies. Political pressure is applied from groups of local citizens and local chapters of national pressure groups. Many argue that the real locus of power affecting schools rests in the power structure of the community. The type of power structure may be related to such factors as size of the community and its past tradition of political involvement. Mass communications, transportation, and the increasing authority of the state have caused a shift in power away from rural domination. The small, rural school is characterized by a limited curriculum, conservative tax picture, conservative faculty and staff, and a student population homogeneous in background and values. Controversial areas in which conflict would be likely are changes that would demand more money, changes in the curriculum that would deal with value-laden subjects, and consolidation which would involve loss of the local school. The literature suggests that the power structure decides economic issues independent of public debate but lets various community factions decide noneconomic issues. Change however, can come as a result of the will of the small, rural community to improve educational opportunities, a sophisticated understanding of the resources available from outside the community, and a sympathetic understanding of existing community values. (JH)

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THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF SMALL TOWN AND RURAL SCHOOLS

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THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF SMALL TOWN AND RURAL SCHOOLS

The American public school system is generally considered to be locally controlled and politically non-partisan. Many would hold that ideally it should be non-political. Schools are, however, creatures of the state and are supported by tax monies. They are therefore "political" whatever the ideology may say. And not infrequently schools find themselves the object of great political, if not partisan, pressure from concerned groups of local citizens or from local chapters of national pressure groups. Beyond this, today's school is very much a part of the larger communities of state and nation. These, too, exert political pressure both in the form of financial inducements and of restrictive requirements.

Finally, even those persons who in one sense <u>are</u> the school--the administration and faculty--may engage in activities that are political in nature in an attempt to influence policy or working conditions.

The person interested in the politics of education in any given type of community must first have some appreciation of this general political setting in which the school operates. The first section of this paper will deal with this topic. Then attention will be turned to the distinguishing characteristics of the rural community. The final section will deal with the particular nature of the politics of education in that type of community.

<u>The School in Its Political Setting</u>

American political ideology has long emphasized the idea of local involvement or "grass roots" organization in many facets of life. There is something of a general distrust of the power of

large organizations, be they political, economic, or religious. This is not to say that large, complex, and centrally controlled organizations are not to be found; in the technical society in which we live they are likely inevitable. However, attitudes toward them are ambivalent at best; and institutional means of exercising some control at the local level are often adopted. The congregational form of government among many of the churches is one example; the refusal of small communities to join in any meaningful type of metropolitan-wide government is another. A third is the manner in which most of our schools are organized.

The Tenth Amendment to the United States Constitution delegated the responsibility for education to the various states. Many of these powers most states now exercise at the state level, e.g., certification of teachers, minimum standards in building and curriculum, requirements as to the number of days spent in school and what legally constitutes a school day, and in some cases, decisions as to textbooks to be used. By and large, however, the day-to-day operation of the schools is delegated by state law to locally selected boards of education. These boards, in turn, make general policy but then delegate most of the operational oversight and concerns to the superintendent. All of this is, of course, familiar territory to most readers.

The fact that a local group of persons, usually elected, does have a policy function with regard to such areas as hiring of personnel, expenditure of funds, and the curriculum, determines much of the political nature of the schools. Part of our general approach to education has been that this is an area in which parents and local community members <u>should</u> have some concern and some influence, rather than something that ideally should be left to the control of the "professional." Thus it is generally assumed that the locally elected school board and its hired personnel should be open to persuasion and control by the local citizens.

Influencing the local board may be done in a variety of ways. Organizing to "throw the rascals out" on election day is the

time-honored democratic means in situations where boards are elected. However, elections are staged only periodically; and as terms are normally staggered, any one election may not allow a total shift in control or philosophy. In actual practice, it is rare for a school board election to arouse enough public interest over its policies for the election to be considered a public referendum. Yet the potential for public recall remains a fact of life; and no elected official can entirely ignore it.

Even when an election is not imminent, any elected official who wishes to keep his position should be alert to widespread dissatisfaction with his performance. Eventually the day of reckoning will come. By the same token, any person--such as a school superintendent--whose position is dependent upon a public official is well advised to be aware of strong stirrings among the electorate. Citizen expression may take the form of organized group pressure by means of demonstrations, attendance at public meetings, literature distribution, public statements for the mass media, letter-writing and telephone campaigns, or it may begin with a general expression of discontent on the part of a variety of people. Such open expression of opinion is well within the norms of democratic politics, providing the level and tone of the charges are not too close to libel. Theoretically such campaigns are mounted over issues, not personalities. In practice these campaigns are probably more likely to arouse great public involvement when the issue is personified.

Not so socially or morally acceptable as the above means are the indirect pressures brought to bear on public officials and their appointees by individuals who do not hesitate to use implied or direct threats to get their personal wishes carried out. Much of the study reported by Gross in Who Runs Our Schools[1] deals with this very problem: the pressures felt by school superintendents and members of school boards to give preferential attention or treatment to individual requests. As Gross points out, some of these were pressures having to do with the interests of all of the children

in the system-- or at least all of the children in some specific category, but a significant proportion of superintendents mentioned pressures in such areas as the awarding of contracts and the hiring and dismissal of personnel. While admitting that these pressures are undesirable from the point of view of either democratic theory or professionalism, they must be considered as a part of the political or power environment in which the local school operates.

Half-way between the kinds of pressures brought by individuals on behalf of their private interests and those brought by groups of local citizens who are vitally concerned about some aspect of the policy of the school officials are those groups that are essentially formed to forward some political, economic, or religious goal and who see the school as one arena for propagating their convictions. Included in such a listing would be very legitimate organizations like the Chamber of Commerce or the Council on Political Education of the AFL-CIO. Also included would be groups which come nearer the fringe of respectability such as the John Birch Society. These groups are most apt to be concerned with curricula content, including the content of books, visual aids, and other teaching materials. Their pressures may be direct, such as the challenge of a particular teacher or book. More often they are indirect. Rather than casting negative aspersions about what already has gone on, they take a positive approach by supplying well-produced printed material or films, or competent speakers to present a topic. These contributions are made available free of charge to the school, and while the topic is naturally presented from the "correct" point of view of the organization, much of it is not grossly propagandistic.

While pressures such as these are not to be ignored if one is concerned about decision-making and power in the school, many would argue that they do not really deal with the question of who exercises the power in or over the school system. And many would go on to argue that the real locus of power rests ultimately in the "power structure" of the community.

Ever since the publication of Hunter's Community Power Structure[2] and the Lynds' study of Middletown,[3] a good deal of attention has been paid to the notion that communities are basically run by an invisible government made up of the economically dominant members. These power figures, however, are thought not to operate openly in the decision-making arena; instead they make the decisions and then pass on responsibility for instituting them to a second level of power made up of lesser economic people, professionals, and public political figures. A number of studies by sociologists of places other than Hunter's Regional City and Middletown have documented the existence of fairly monolithic power structures. Vidich and Bensman talk about the invisible government of Springdale, a village of approximately 1,000 in a township of 2,500.[4] Others have purported to find such power organizations in communities of 100,000.[5] The usual technique employed is to begin with a panel of people assumed to be knowledgeable about their community or at least some specific aspect of it and ask them who has power and how issues are settled. Those who are nominated are then interviewed and asked to identify the powerholders. This process is continued until virtual consensus is reached.

The idea of a "power structure" has not been without its critics. Most notable among these have been Robert Dahl and some of his students. They argue that the methodology of the Hunter school predisposes it to find some type of monolithic structure, and that furthermore there is a great deal of confusion due to the failure to separate the potential for power, the reputation of having power, and the actual exercise of power. In general the pluralists, as they have come to be called, suggest that there must be analysis of several specific and important issues in the community, noting who actually exercises power in any given situation rather than settling for a statement of who is assumed to have the power. When put to an empirical test such as this, the results have been somewhat different from those of the "reputational approach" school which finds one group in control of the community. Issue analysis has generally

found that different people and groups appear at the center of the decision-making process when different issues are at stake, although there is some overlapping of interests.

The debate by now has a large literature ranging from a concern with the philosophy of science and the methodologies to empirical studies.[6] It is not the point here to review all of these issues. There are, however, some points which may be taken from both perspectives that may have a bearing on our larger concern, namely the relationship of the school to the exercise of power in the community.

One point is that the type of power structure of a community may well be related to factors such as size of the community, or the past tradition of political involvement. Those studies carried out by political scientists that have found a pluralistic base for the distribution of power have generally been on medium to large-sized cities. Indeed, the whole notion of pluralism rests on the assumption that there are several different people who are competent to come to the fore when different issues are at stake. It has also generally been found that most issues bring forth competing groups, each with its own preferred solution. This assumes a fairly heterogeneous community. While these characteristics could be found in the small community, it seems they might be more likely in a larger one.

A second point is that no matter what the methodology used and the basic assumptions made, no study has found a really widespread distribution of power on any of the issues researched. Even in the issue-analysis approach, the actual exercise of power is seen to be limited to a very small percentage of the population. A survey of the literature by Pellegrin found no study in which more than three percent of the adult population actively participated in decision-making processes in the community.[7]

In the third place, nearly all empirical studies point out the involvement and importance of non-office-holders, i.e., whether the study finds one monopolistic power group or competing factions, they do find the membership consists of other than formal office holders.

Another point on which there is wide agreement is that although

all persons designated as part of the power structure do not participate in all decisions--and indeed the group may not even be a solidary group--those who are generally the most influential, both by reputation and in the analysis of specific issues, are among the top economic dominants of the community. A second influential group in many cases is the publicly elected officials, although the Hunter type of analysis generally relegates them to the second level of power along with the other professional people who are involved. Some studies indicate that their power comes less from their office as such than from the backing of the power structure that made sure of their nomination or election.

A fifth point is that the school superintendent, although the nominal administrator of one of the largest enterprises in most communities, especially smaller ones, is seldom seen as having a power base of his own or being considered one of the top influentials in the community. In fact, it is interesting to note how seldom the literature on community power has concerned itself with public education at all.

Because of this general unconcern with education in the literature of community power, one research report especially useful for our analysis is a comparative study of three Oregon communities ranging in size from 4,000 to 25,000 population conducted by Pellegrin and his associates.[8] They were interested in four areas of activity: the economy, government, public education, and public recreation. Information regarding influential persons in each of these areas was gathered by nomination. In addition, data were obtained about eighteen detailed case histories (six for each community) of decision-making bearing on the topics of downtown development and revitalization, planning programs, facilities and programs in public recreation, the school curriculum, and the expansion and development of educational facilities. Even with an approach such as this that emphasizes by design the concern with the school, the researchers found little to indicate that there was much direct relationship between the schools and power structures in these communities. Nominations data for each of the activity areas showed fairly distinct lists, with comparatively

little overlap. Of those persons who were nominated as influential in more than one area, the greatest overlap was between economic affairs and government. In fact, in the nominations for "general influentials," those so designated tended to be the top influentials in the economic and political realm. More to the point for our discussion, Pellegrin notes:

> Nearly all persons listed as influential in education and recreation who are also influential in economic or governmental affairs play their major roles in the latter areas of activity. Stated otherwise, very few who play major roles in educational or recreational affairs are also influential in the economy or in government.[9]

Their case study research even indicated that the general influentials who were nominated as important in education seemed not to be as involved as the nominations data would lead one to believe. In other words, they found that the link between the schools and those who are generally regarded as the community's leading figures would seem to be a very limited and tenuous link.

Those who were influential in the sphere of education, by and large, were those who held some official position related to the schools: the superintendent, his top assistants, the school board members. Pellegrin further states that the school board members were rarely very influential or active in other community affairs.

One distinction of some importance must be made when speaking of the question of who exercises power over the schools. If one is talking of power as the right and ability to make administrative decisions about day-to-day functioning, curriculum, discipline, or even personnel problems, then there is little doubt that by and large this authority is vested in and exercised by the board of education and the school officials--the superintendent and those to whom he delegates specific authority. As was noted earlier, it is only realistic to be aware that these school officials operate in a context of various cross-pressures and that therefore decisions made may well take into account the anticipated reactions to "significant others." The study mentioned

earlier by Gross has documented this very strongly, and there is no reason to suppose that superintendents in Massachusetts are unique in this regard. Yet the pressures these superintendents reported were not those of some omnipotent "power structure." The most frequently mentioned group was parents or the PTA--hardly anyone's definition of the power elite. In the order of the frequency of mention, the next eight individuals or groups listed were: individual school board members; teachers; taxpayers' associations; town finance committees or city councils; politicians; business or commercial organizations; individuals influential for economic reasons; and personal friends. Less than half of the superintendents mentioned any of the last six groups.

If most towns are run by power elites made up of the key economic figures, then it would seem from this report that the majority of the latter have been singularly unconcerned about what the superintendents do with their school systems, or else the superintendents have been very unaware of what constitutes pressure. While the data indicate that about 45 percent of the superintendents noted some pressure from "individuals influential for economic reasons," a further reading of the report indicates that they were acting in just that capacity--as individuals, and over concerns which were individual, such as the awarding of school contracts, or the hiring or retention of personnel.

Thus, on the level of routine decision-making as power, most of the literature leaves us with the impression that the power structure, qua power structure, if such exists, is not vitally concerned with what happens in the schools. The fact that so few of the studies about power even mention education would support this view, as would the Pellegrin study and the research on Massachusetts superintendents.

This does not mean that school officials are entirely free to act on their own. Even if the power elite is not actively involved or concerned about an issue, it may be very much a public issue. One of the interesting things to note about school issues is that they often tend to bring out persons to do battle who would not become involved in any other type of community power struggle. And in the absence of

some overriding decision by an all-powerful group, the battle between two lesser groups over such things as the location of a new school building, the retention of a controversial teacher, or the building of a gymnasium may prove just as troublesome for the administrator.

In this kind of situation, however, there are some resources available to the superintendent and other school officials that in effect give them a degree of power. Being able to control when an issue is raised is one resource. While they may not be able to delay indefinitely on some needs, school officials often can wait until the school seems to be in generally good favor before presenting the more controversial changes.

Another resource available is the ability to choose the manner in which the issue is defined. The person first initiating action on a given proposal can often determine the scope of the problem. In addition, school personnel are generally the "experts" on educational issues, and their expertise itself is a resource which allows them to exert a great deal of influence on the final outcome. To the extent that the controversial issues are rationally discussed, they bring the resources of their own knowledge and the ability of their staff to gather and disseminate relevant material. These are factors of no small importance.

Some issues will arise that cause repercussions that the school hierarchy cannot predict, let alone forestall or control. The literature of case studies is filled with examples of battles over what a given teacher may have said in a classroom or assigned in the way of reading material or movies, or over practices that some group feels are offensive to its values (such as a religious ceremony at Christmas or graduation). In some of these situations the school may find itself standing as a unit against a widespread community antagonism. More often it is likely that the school personnel finds itself split along the same lines that divide the community at large. In the latter case the issue is less one of the power of the school, or the power over the school, than it is of which faction in the community will be most influential in the long run.

This type of conflict brings up another dimension or definition of power. Rather than viewing power as the ability to make administrative decisions, it may be viewed as the ability to prevail in open conflict when a particular issue is at stake. Literature directly relevant to this point seems limited. However, because such questions of power are apt to arise over innovations, there is a body of literature that may be very important for our understanding of the school in its power environment. This is the growing literature on innovation and change in schools.

Going again to Roland Pellegrin, in a paper on the Analysis of Sources and Processes of Innovation in Education, he compares the role of the teacher and the superintendent in this area. The teacher, he finds, is generally expected to be innovative, but largely within the confines of his or her own classroom.

> The superintendent, on the other hand, is currently viewed by researchers as the key figure in the innovation process at the local level. Structural adaptations which are necessary for change to be introduced effectively depend upon the decisions of the superintendent and his top assistants.[10]

The power of school board members to be innovators, or indeed to be influential, Pellegrin finds to be exaggerated. The structure is such that the board is more apt to function in the role of an inhibitor, rather than an initiator, of change.

> The role of the laymen in educational innovation is paradoxical. On the one hand, they often encourage local educators to adopt innovations that have received a great deal of publicity at the national level. It is likely, however, that public opinion exerts a braking force on innovation at least as frequently as it stimulates it . . . . The active laymen who do get involved in educational activities are usually those of middle class status who are 'pro-education.' They represent the highly educated, high income, managerial, and professional segments of the community.[11]

Not all sources of change are indigenous to the community. Although empirical evidence seems limited as to the actual amount of innovative

impact they have, one could note state departments of education, faculties of the colleges of education, and professional educational associations all as being potential sources of innovation. Especially does it seem that the Federal Government is a very important agent in the change process. One can immediately think of the civil rights legislation as an important input into the educational system. The National Defense Education Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act are examples whereby availability of funds has caused some change in priorities in the local schools. More explicitly, Pellegrin notes that the "United States Office of Education has assumed a vital role as a source of innovation. . . . This role is currently increasing owing to the excellence of the professional staff now employed in the USOE."[12] In general, then, it may be noted that many sources of innovation are outside of the local community, and many are outside of the education profession. However, the introduction of innovations into the local school community is apt to be through official school personnel, and particularly through the superintendent.

Pressures for change do not mean that all changes will be accepted, however. Changes that are presented so that they are desired by the people, that are introduced rather slowly through existing institutions, and that deal with the material or technical aspects of the society rather than its basic values, are generally easily accepted. Moreover, change is more likely to be accepted in heterogeneous societies than in homogeneous ones.

Goldhammer notes that there are five categories of factors that may be related to public acceptance of change in education, at least if one may generalize from research in fields other than education.[13] One is the image that the public holds of the person advocating the change. In the educational sphere it would seem that this is most likely to be the superintendent. Goldhammer suggests that "to gain the confidence and respect of the community, he [the superintendent] must be accepted both as an authority on education and as an adherent to the stable values and goals of the community."[14] Secondly, he notes that the public's image of the organization and the ends that the organization

serves will affect the public's acceptance of change within it. Third is the public's view of the proposed change itself, "the vaguer, the less specific, the less direct the advantages and significance of the innovations to the citizens, the less likely they will be to favor the proposed changes."[15] Fourth is the congruence of the proposed change with generally accepted values and recognized social needs. Finally, there are unique situational factors which facilitate or impede the acceptance. Along this line Goldhammer posits that the small community with its more tradition-bound and provincial outlook is more apt to be resistant to change than the larger one.

The above-mentioned concern with public acceptance of change presupposes that it is within the power of the public at large to accept or reject innovative changes. Yet one might guess that it is in this very area that an informal power structure might be most influential should it desire to act. If an effective power structure decided against a new practice, then by definition the public would not be faced with the opportunity of choosing.

After a rather thorough review of the literature on community power, Kimbrough asserts that this is indeed the situation when the practice or issue at stake is one that involves any major new expenditure or basic redistribution of the previously committed monies. In other words, he feels that the power structure will step in and make decisions on educational matters but only when an economic question of some consequence is involved. However, that often tends to be the case in innovative programs. As Kimbrough puts it,

> Decisive power is exercised in most local schooldistricts by relatively few persons who hold top positions of influence in the informal power structure of the school district. The success of significant educational projects and proposals is often heavily dependent upon the support or lack of support of these men of power.[16]

Two sociologists who have attempted to deal directly with the question of power and conflict in the school and the resources available for resolution of these conflicts are Ronald Corwin[17] and David Minar.[18]

Corwin's is a theoretical approach based on the notion that the school is a complex organization; Minar's is an empirical study of the resolution of conflict in various suburban school districts.

Corwin differs from Kimbrough in his assessment of the general political environment in that he views the school as operating in a complex pressure-group society. Yet,

> . . . while pressure groups are highly visible and at times the dominating elements of the power environment, they do not encompass it. As the school gains professional and administrative autonomy, direct pressures applied by outside groups can be resisted. As direct pressures become less effective, other, often more subtle uses of power, are engaged to influence the school.[19]

These "more subtle" pressures he feels may well originate in a community power structure, but that structure will vary greatly depending, among other things, on the degree of local orientation vs. cosmopolitan orientation of leadership. Corwin draws up a rather interesting typology based on the local-cosmopolitan orientation of the school and the local-cosmopolitan orientation of the community. His first type is that in which both the school and the community are locally oriented. This type he suggests is least likely to produce power conflicts

> . . . since the community power structure converges with that of the school board and its officials. It is perhaps most typical of some traditionally oriented, small rural communities, where the 'dedicated' and the 'elders' are likely to reign. School boards of such schools have been able to retain control over the beliefs of their teachers, primarily through hiring practices.[20]

The combinations where one group of leaders is locally oriented and the other is cosmopolitan he proposes as potentially explosive. The cosmopolitan school in the cosmopolitan community may find itself with some conflict, but the conflicts that occur will be "minor skirmishes over which aspect of the program should be changed first and how, rather than open warfare about the value of change itself."[21]

When faced with the pressures of its societal surroundings, there are at least five possible responses that the school may make, Corwin suggests. First is a simple passive adaptation in which the school consciously imposes self-restraint in order to avoid conflict. The second possible response is to form a coalition; a third possibility is to co-opt its antagonists. One of the classic examples of this in education is the co-optation of the PTA. Co-optation of the power structure may be more difficult. The last two suggested responses are bargaining and competition.

> It is important to recognize that in a bargaining situation not only are some goals compromised, but others, which are deemed worthy, are maintained at all costs. Identification of the order of importance of goals greatly increases understanding of an organization . . . . This bargaining between organizations and other groups in the environment is underwritten by the pervasive norm of reciprocity, the idea that one good turn deserves another.[22]

When dealing with the notion of competition, Corwin speaks particularly of the kind of competition that takes place with the community when there is an attempt by the community to challenge the autonomy of the school. For example, he views the issue of academic freedom as one instance where competition may need to be the school's mode of response. Competition is roughly the opposite response to voluntary passive adaptation.

> Two traditions in public education propose different policies. On the one hand, there is the long history of community control and a philosophy of education which correspondingly makes the school essentially a character-training center subject to the needs, wishes, and demands of the local community. On the other hand, there is a less prevalent but no less ingrained belief in professional autonomy with corresponding stress on intellectual curiosity, freedom to inquire, and creativity . . . . Persons who subscribe to the second philosophy are more likely to compete with their environment than are those who emphasize character training and local control.[23]

The study by Minar is an entirely different sort. Use was made of aggregate voting data on referenda and elections in suburban school

districts. These data were then analyzed in terms of certain social characteristics of the districts in an attempt to understand why conflict seems more intense in some areas than in others. Minar concludes that

> . . . conflict is differently and more easily handled in communities with larger resources of skills in conflict management, and that these resources are associated with indicators of what is commonly called social status. Thus the social structure of a community imparts a tone to the local political system . . . . [24]

Of the possible alternative explanations for this relationship, Minar suggests that the best reasoning is that skill in conflict management is one of the skills learned and practiced in the educated professions, and that these professions are one of the chief indicators of high social status. People who "are used to exercising or seeing others exercise the kinds of social control that get problems solved, people educated in the use and understanding of verbal symbols, people accustomed to seeking closure on problems through the use of such tools,"[25] are able to bring these skills to bear in the management of other community problems as well, such as conflict over schools.

There are other researchers who argue that concern with the politics of education at the local level is to miss the major source of political pressure on the schools. The crucial center of power resides, in their view, with national organizations and state and Federal government. Sieber, for instance, comments that "in most communities this national system reduces local formal control of education to a mere shadow of its ideological intent."[26]

While the question of the impact or influence of the national organizations and culture versus the local power organization is an empirical sort of question, and though we may not be sure of their relative importance in given kinds of communities, we can be sure that the national community is increasingly important to and concerned with the decision-making of the school. An economically interdependent society with a mobile population can no longer count on the local community to know

best what is good for its children in the way of schooling. The chances are that they will migrate from that community by adulthood, if not before. If their education is not adequate, they become an economic problem for some other community. If there is not some standardization of educational practices, they become a problem merely in the transfer from one school to another.

The status of the United States as one of the major world powers has also meant a national consciousness of manpower needs. As a nation it cannot depend upon the whims of the local communities; national priorities demand national attention.

There may be many causes of the trend toward centralization of authority in the state and at the national level. But one final cause must be mentioned and that is the civil rights movement. The movement is national, the total nation is involved in its problems, and the greatest impact on the schools has come from Federal pressures.

The Small Town and the Rural Community

One of the most impressively documented facts of contemporary life in the United States is the movement of the population from rural, and particularly farm, life to the urban areas. An urbanization is proceeding at a rate that is nothing short of dramatic at the present time. The 1950 census reported the rural farm population as 23,048,350; the rural nonfarm population as 21,181,325; and the urban population as 96,467,686. By 1960 the number of people in these three categories was reported as 13,444,898, 40,596,990, and 125,283,783, respectively.[27]

While traditional sociology has long talked of a rural-urban dichotomy, the census statistics since 1920 have included a third category, the rural-nonfarm. Useful discussion of community life must also take note of this "in-between" category. This rural-nonfarm population includes those who have had to give up farming as a way of life but have preferred to "stay put" in their rural environment; increasingly it also includes many people who have moved out from the city and the well-populated suburbs, to seek an even more "rural"

way of life, or a cheaper one. At the same time these new migrants are still basically urban residents in their work, their attitudes, and their connections with the larger society.

While it is not the point here to make a detailed demographic survey, in general one can say that those who move out of the rural life to the cities are predominately young adults for whom traditional agriculture no longer offers a viable means of earning a living. Those who stay are more likely to be the older and "settled" members of the community and their young children. On the other hand, many of those who fall in the rural-nonfarm category are young families who have moved from the more central area of the city. Thus, while in some senses the whole age spectrum may be represented in the general rural area, at least in those areas which lie not too distant from the large metropolitan complexes, there is not necessarily a continuity of personnel through the various age groupings that is typical of the stereotyped small stable community.

The suburban migration is one factor which is likely to change the complexion of the small town faster than out-migration. The out-migration leaves those who represent the major values and power in the community still likely to be there. They do not feel the pressure to leave. Thus, while change would come over a generation, it is not immediately felt. The impact made by suburbanization may be much more rapid and disrupting. While those migrating to smaller communities may, in some cases, "adopt" the small town and become very interested and involved in it, newcomers bring to this involvement a set of values and understandings which are bound to be somewhat different from those of inhabitants who have lived all of their lives in the given community and in a rural way of life. Especially is this likely to be true in the case of the "exurbanites," those of upper-middle class, professional backgrounds, whose major commitments are to a cosmopolitan group in the near-by city.

Studies of small towns, such as Springdale[28] or Plainville,[29] indicate that they have a well-known and established class system although it may not include all of the variety of classes found in a

more metropolitan setting. But there is a distinct difference in the degree of cosmopolitanism of the upper and upper-middle classes in the small town and the large city.

Yet the isolated type of community first reported by West in Plainville, USA is changing. The total society is now an urbanized mass society in many ways. In it the precise distinctions between the urban way of life and the rural disappear. "The ways of life are so intertwined that whatever institutional structures obtain in the society will be constraining in approximately the same way on all people, regardless of their rural or urban residential location."[30] Mass communications, transportation, and the increasing concern by a central authority such as the state over conditions in the community ranging from its schools to its registration and voting procedures all serve to tie the community into the larger community of the nation.

The reality of an urbanized society notwithstanding, there do seem to be some recognizable differences between the "city-dweller" and his "country-cousin," especially in their perspectives on life, politics, and values. Probably the best-known statement of this point of view (in the sociological literature) is that in Bensman and Vidich's Small Town in Mass Society. There, they report, the inhabitants like to think of themselves as "just plain folks," a term with a great many connotations. It is a way of referring to what they feel to be the equalitarianism of the rural life as well as a whole set of moral values: honesty, fair play, trustworthiness, good-neighborliness, helfulness, sobriety, and clean-living.[31] In direct contrast is their image of the larger city as corrupt, uncaring, unwholesome for bringing up children, and irreligious. Yet, despite this tendency to see itself as more independent and better, the authors point out that even Springdale is tied into the larger society; and the inhabitants, by and large, have accepted much of the value system of the larger society whether they recognize it or not. Like many of their counterparts in the city they are proud of America's material and technological progress, her military strength, and the fact that she is a major world power. In conventional political terms, the residents of Springdale are

overwhelmingly conservative. A review of the larger literature on political orientation would suggest that in this respect they are representative of small town and rural inhabitants in most of America.

One characteristic of the small town that most sociological literature consistently points out is the high visibility of all actions and the efficient informal communications network. Information on matters of concern to the local community, as well as outright gossip, tends to be disseminated rather rapidly. It is not that information is always accurate or that everyone is included on the grapevine, but news bearing some resemblance to the original item is often widely known and discussed in a hurry.

One part of the ideology of the small community is that it is a place where local concerns are handled by local people, and that in a small community where "everybody knows everybody and their business," matters are handled openly and all can be involved in the political process. In actuality one of the major aspects of an urbanized society is that such local autonomy does not exist. Business, the professionals in the community, the mass media, and communications all serve to bring the influence and values of the larger society into the decision-making arena of the small town.

Mack and McElrath point out that what is meant by the process of urbanization in a society, in addition to an increase in scale and the size of the cities themselves, is "the accretion of control and coordination activities in cities and . . . the development of a network of urban centers."[32] One of the trademarks of contemporary society is its interdependence. The small community is not exempt. Interdependence and the division of labor are the other side of the coin of central coordination. The process is such that more and more of the institutions of the small town are going to be regulated in at least some degree by a "higher" authority at the state or national level in public institutions, by national companies in the sphere of business, and by national professional and pressure groups in many other areas.

The political situation of the small community is one example of change occurring where the current trend is likely to be the dominant

one. In the recent past, state legislatures as well as the national Congress had an overrepresentation of rural and small-town populations due to the fact that while the population was moving to the cities, the states were slow to redistrict. Rurally dominated legislatures were not about to redistrict themselves out of power or to radically change the nature of their representation in the Congress. The willingness of the Supreme Court to enter this "political thicket" in the case of Baker v. Carr eventually led to the now-famous one-man, one-vote decision that population is the only legal basis for the drawing of district lines. Thus, while in one sense the less populated, rural states are still overrepresented in the Senate, the balance of power in the legislative bodies as a whole is shifting, and will continue to do so. Consequently, legislation reflective of rural values and representative of rural desires will be less frequent.

One area that was briefly mentioned earlier is of real consequence for some small communities. This is the impact or "threat" of being taken over by the suburbanization trend. As the metropolitan complexes expand in search of more space for housing, various possibilities arise for the future of the existing small towns in the area. Nearly all of the possibilities involve a change in status and power and a disruption of traditional ways of life.

Some places, like Springdale, are far enough away from the larger city that they are not yet in line for a "direct take-over" of subdivision-style mass housing, but they are close enough that some city workers will find it economically advantageous to move out and commute. Often these are people who have small town values and choose the community as much for its life style as for any other reason. Commuting takes a good deal of time, however, and when put with the fact that they are newcomers in a society which values the past, in many cases they are unlikely to be truly assimilated. They pose little threat to the existing power structure.

However, a really picturesque small community on occasion finds itself the exurban mecca of an educated and fairly wealthy segment of the city population. A "take-over" of this nature is likely to result

in a power clash over various small community institutions, including the schools. The values of the two groups are apt to be different, the income levels and life styles likewise. And especially is the value of education and the type of education desired likely to come into question. Dobriner describes one such situation in his study of "The Natural History of a Reluctant Suburb."[33] The newcomers are people with sufficient skills in organization and leadership that a real desire on their part to change the nature of the community will have a great impact.

Other types of "suburbanization" can occur when land simply becomes too valuable as potential home sites for it to be economically feasible to farm. Then subdivision begins. The new neighborhoods may be working class to upper-middle class, but they are very likely to have family homes and to attract families with school age children. The degree of impact and the interest families take in other phases of community affairs may vary widely, but schools will feel the impact of numbers, if not an immediate fight for control of the organization.

The "threat" of such disruption has made many a small-town resident wish that his community could somehow isolate itself from movements of the larger world. But wishes are not reality.

Actual power structure studies of the small town are not too plentiful. The best-known, full-length study is that by Vidich and Bensman of the town they call Springdale, a village in upstate New York of approximately 1,000 people, plus another 1,500 inhabitants of the township that are a part of the total community. It is a town that has been in existence for nearly two centuries and thus has a deep sense of history and a good deal of New England tradition behind it. It is within twenty-five miles of three different medium-sized industrial centers. The authors make note of the dependence of Springdale upon the larger society in many areas, including that of politics. They did find, however, that while the state and county political organizations had some impact on Springdale when it came to the larger issues of county, state, and national elections, internal Springdale affairs were generally run by a power elite that the authors termed the invisible

government. While the three men identified operated nominally through the Republican Party caucus and committee, in point of fact, power was not exercised in accordance with the usual definitions of democracy. Nominations to official positions were controlled by Lee, Flint, and Jones; issues were decided by them before they were allowed to become major issues in the community. Most of the community was basically apathetic about the whole question of who ran their town, but when attempts were made, through the nomination of "outsiders," to fill political positions with people who might cause some change, the invisible government was always able to bring out enough support to defeat any realistic attempt at overthrow of its base of power. The top influential was the most important businessman, as many studies of larger communities would lead us to suspect. The other two were a newspaper editor/political officeholder, and a lawyer. Springdale fits fairly well the power elite pattern.

Robert Agger has researched some small western communities with a methodology that emphasized political structure and communications.[34] In general he found most of the population uninvolved and apathetic. The influentials were those of high income, education, and status. Beyond the general sphere of influence, he does report "power structures" controlled by two or three people that were very concerned about maintaining the status quo.

A comparative study of six southwestern cities found that business provided the largest number of top influentials in each city, regardless of size.[35] Fanelli, however, reported in a study of a Mississippi community of about 5,000 that while only the newspaper editor was influential in several areas, it was possible to isolate ten leaders who were considered the most influential.[36]

The suggestion of the existing literature seems to be that in very small communities the notion of a definite power structure which is generally tied in with local business and conservative in outlook is a likely reality. Such a view could be at least partly supported by the realization that most such communities lack the necessary range

of educated and skilled personnel to operate on the pluralistic basis of many people becoming involved, each person active in a very limited problem area.

A final note of caution in interpreting the power structure in this fashion, however, is that nagging reminder that in many areas of concern the major decisions are really made at a higher level than the local community.

The School in the Rural Community

In speaking of the school and the rural area or the small community, one must begin with the awareness that school districts are not necessarily coterminous with other political subdivisions or community boundaries. Many times the school district does coincide with township limits or perhaps even village limits, but often the district may encompass a whole county or a part of one. Thus, when we speak of the school and the local power environment in the rural area, we may be speaking of a wide variety of things--and the analysis may not always fit all situations.

There is also the fact that not all school districts operate schools. Particularly at the high school level, many small districts find it more economically feasible to pay tuition for their students at a neighboring school in another district. In cases such as these the power arrangements will differ also.

There are some characteristics of the rural or small town school and its community setting that tend to be true and to have certain consequences. One is the factor of small size. Unless there has been a great deal of consolidation, the school population will be limited simply because it is drawing from a limited population base. Certain other characteristics tend to follow from this: fairly small classes, a limited range of subjects offered, and few teachers. Since the small school cannot usually afford to offer everything, the emphasis is likely to be on basic academic subjects that do not require much in the way of laboratory equipment, the one exception to this often being instruction in agriculture. In what amounts to a

general pattern among schools in all types of communities, the rural school is likely to be short on funds.

The factor of expense cannot be ignored in the discussion of schools anywhere. Good schools are expensive and becoming more so. Given the property tax as a base for local school support, the issue of expense is particularly important in a rural area where so many of the people do have relatively large amounts of land but comparatively little cash income. The tax picture reinforces the generally conservative orientation of the community, and the result for the schools is a community demand for an emphasis on the "three R's" without any "frills."

By and large the faculty of the small school can be expected to be politically, and probably educationally, conservative. Part of this is due to the oft-mentioned habit of small communities to hire "safe" teachers when at all possible, "safe" meaning those whose values and habits are generally in line with those of the community itself. Often this practice is reflected in giving preference to teachers who are from the community originally. If there are not local people available, then others from a similar rural background are preferred. Such practices are further encouraged by the fact that relatively few urban-background teachers are desirous of teaching in small rural schools if given any kind of choice.

One might expect that teachers, being among the most educated segments of the community, would fill a variety of leadership positions outside of the school. Seldom is this the case, and there are a variety of reasons. One of the norms of the teaching role is that teachers are good "neutral" citizens, uninvolved in controversy except perhaps controversy over the school itself. Such neutrality is thought to enhance teachers' ability to be objective in the classroom and not to alienate any group of students. A further reason for the lack of teacher leadership in many rural districts is the domination of a low-tax ideology. This ideology added to the lack of an industrial base to tax means that teacher salary schedules are apt to be low, and teacher turnover among able teachers is apt to be

high. Very seldom do newcomers manage to exert much leadership, especially in traditional kinds of communities. A further point is that teaching as a profession or occupation just does not have the status of business or some of the higher professions in American culture. Therefore, an educated teacher is simply not the social status equivalent of the less-educated but reasonably successful businessman, and leadership tends to be associated with prestige.

As the rural areas in most parts of the country are fairly homogeneous in population, so, too, will the pupils in these schools be very similar in background and values. One major exception to this, of course, is the rural South where a large segment of the population is Black. The issue of racial integration is too complex for discussion in a paper such as this, although integration will be mentioned briefly under the section on conflicts. But in most rural schools, for better or worse, a great similarity of values will exist.

If one considers the rural school from the viewpoint of the functional contribution that it makes to the community it serves, in many respects it does not differ significantly from its urban counterpart. In other ways, however, it does differ.

The traditional function of all schools is the transmission of the values and knowledge of the community to the younger generation and the socialization of the young to internalize this culture. Especially in a very pluralistic society where there is not widespread agreement on values, this function is apt to generate conflict. Yet, the more homogeneous the community, the less reason to expect major disagreements as to values, and therefore the less conflict over the schools. Rural and small communities thus are less apt to find their schools in the center of serious controversies of this type than would be true of some of the larger cities.

In terms of other general functions, the rural school as well as the urban serves as the community babysitter for young children, and an appropriate source of social contact and social life, especially for boys and girls of dating age. To at least a limited degree

it prepares young people for some productive vocation and in the meantime keeps them out of the overcrowded labor market.

There are other roles that the school plays for the rural community that may be a bit more unique. One of these is that the school is one of the few, if not the organization, that has widespread contact within the community and with which most of the community members identify. It functions as a symbol of community enterprise and pride. There is often no other organization like the school athletic team or the school band that represents the community as a community in any kind of contact with others.

Furthermore, the school building itself often serves a variety of community-wide purposes--social, political, and sometimes religious. Seldom is there another auditorium that will seat as many as the school gymnasium or the stadium. Cafeteria facilities may be available to serve large crowds; school playgrounds supplement a limited park system. In a very real sense of the word, the school often serves as a community center as well as a school.

From this type of background knowledge about the school and the community, what, if anything, can be said about the areas in which conflict over the schools is likely?

A sampling of likely controversial areas would first of all have to include any major change that would demand more money. This could be anything from an attempt to raise teachers' salaries to the building of a desperately needed new school. Especially likely to be prey to the economic argument are attempts to add so-called "frills" such as music, athletics, guidance counselors, or even foreign language teachers.

Changes in the curriculum may arouse strong feelings even when there is not a money question involved if the new subject matter deals with value-laden subjects. Sex education is one such area. Some of the topics in social studies are equally objectionable to many people, particularly those that question in any way the absolute moral rightness and superiority of traditional American ways of doing things.

Another issue that is likely to result in conflict in rural communities is that of consolidation. People of a community are often reluctant to give up their local school even when a rational assessment may seem overwhelmingly in favor of it. Fairly pragmatic reasons may be given in explanation, such as the longer bus ride for the children, the loss of the teachers from the community, etc. In reality the conflict is often a financial one, especially if a high tax district is consolidating with a lower tax one. Sometimes it is another occurrence of the more conservative, provincial values of the community being challenged in a larger school with a more heterogeneous population of students and teachers. Furthermore, loss of the school may be seen as a loss of the community's symbol and center of integration. Whatever its obvious values to the professional educator, consolidation is not always welcomed eagerly by the population.

Most rural and small communities are fairly homogeneous, or so we tend to think of them. But anytime there is a sizable minority of some sort, there is a basis for potential conflict over the school because the status quo will normally favor the majority over the minority, and the minority may well press for change. Gross indicated that this did not seem to be the case with the Catholic minorities in the small towns in Massachusetts. Possibly this is because the Catholic minorities would be likely to exert a braking influence on innovation due to a concern with cost--and that is a small-town philosophy anyway.

Racial minorities present another problem. Few rural or small communities outside of the South have any sizable Negro population. There are those, however, in the Southwest and elsewhere with a Mexican American minority. There are even some where there are still obvious ethnic groups of European origin. These latter are the least likely to present problems to the community or the school in the sense of radically different values or wanting great changes in the system. The integration issue with regard to the Negro is far too complex to

be treated here in any kind of adequate fashion, but one or two things should be pointed out.

It is historically true that minority residents of small towns and rural areas have exercised very little pressure on their own behalf to integrate the schools or to force the school system to provide a more adequate education for their children. The reasons are many, ranging from fear to a simple lack of understanding of how pressure may be applied. However, with the civil rights movement at the national level backing minorities, and having obtained the backing of the Federal government, demands for change are being made in these small communities. The initiative is still being taken by outsiders in many cases, but local minority residents are increasingly supporting it in an active sense. This has been an area of intense conflict and high feelings. The communities and their power structures have not accepted such change gracefully, nor is there any indication that they are about to do so. The power struggle, though, is less apt to be one of the local minority versus the power structure than it is of the small community versus the larger society. The losers are the schools and the children of both races.

The other obvious minority group in this sense is the new suburban migrants into the community. They may in time become the majority, but the fact remains that they and the old-time residents are very often at odds over the schools.

In reporting on data about who blocks the public schools and who supports them, Gross[37] uses the variable of community size as one of his major controls. Some rather interesting things stand out when his category of communities of 5,000 or less are compared to some of the larger cities. Superintendents from small communities were least apt to complain that local government officials attempted to block public education, and, in fact, nearly two-thirds named local government officials as those who did the most to promote the schools. The reverse was true in their estimates of businessmen. Nearly half of the small city superintendents were most apt to name businessmen as chief antagonists, and least apt to name them as best source of

support--twenty-two percent as compared to seventy percent in cities of 10,000 to 49,999. The other group that was seen as blocking progress in small communities was the older population. Again, these superintendents mentioned the older population much more frequently than did superintendents from any other size city. Among organized groups the PTA was most apt to be named by small community superintendents as one of the groups that did most to promote education.

The Politics of the Rural and Small Town Schools

Of what, then, do we speak, however speculatively, when we talk of the political environment of the small town school?

First, it would seem that even more so in small communities than is true in other types of communities, the school is expected to act as a transmitter of the values of traditional, conservative America: the Puritan ethic, American superiority, practical knowledge, and the wholesomeness of small town life. And it should do so without raising the tax burden. As long as it operates in this fashion the school is likely to be considered with regard, and indeed even a good deal of fondness. While squabbles may arise over a given teacher, and individual businessmen may pressure for contract favors, as long as the community does not change drastically through a large suburban immigration, the school can probably move along without a great deal of overt conflict. The similarity in the values of the school leadership and those of the community further lowers the likelihood of open conflict. This similarity is carefully protected by selective recruiting.

But the school cannot avoid all change any more than the community can. Outside agencies with a vested interest in the school will bring pressures to bear; new teachers will come in with new ideas from their training institutions; the community itself is apt to divide on some issues.

The literature would suggest that when the issue at stake is a noneconomic one, any power structure that exists is likely to take a

hands-off policy and let various factions in the community fight it out. Groups of parents, the PTA, and other ad hoc groups, composed of people who would feel powerless and uninvolved in other areas, are likely to organize and attempt to sway opinion. Those who are better educated themselves are likely to support the school administrator's position, but the key to success is often likely to be the co-opting of an important, respected community "name" to the cause.

The literature is highly suggestive that if the issue at stake is an economic one, then the issue will be less apt to be a matter of public debate and decision. Since it would seem that small towns are apt to have an established power structure, one would suppose that very often, at least, members of the power structure would decide the issue independently. Assuming that these members are conservative businessmen, the decision is apt to go against the spending of money much of the time--a decision which the majority of the community would probably approve anyway.

However, there are even economic innovations over which the power structure may have no real control. Any great push by outside authorities may find the community with no alternative but to comply. In this kind of situation, one might speculate that the degree of change that is actually introduced will be directly related to the power and authority of the outside agency proposing it. State boards of education and Federal law are quite authoritative! The National Education Association (NEA), on the other hand, may be much less effective.

Assuming that conflicts are likely, what are the resources available for handling them? Or, eventually, how are they resolved?

The potential resources will vary, of course, according to the nature of the conflict. There may be, however, some basic aspects of the small community that make likely certain patterns of action. One factor that may on occasion be a resource for solving conflicts, and on another may simply exacerbate the situation, is the nature of communications in the small community as compared to the large one. The informal communications network is likely to include a much larger

segment of the important public in a small community than in a large one. If all factions to the dispute are on the same informal network, then one might hypothesize that there is a chance for resolution at the informal level before the conflict hardens. If the issue at stake involves two groups that have little in common socially and informally, or if the issue is one between a power structure and the school, then the factor of communications may be neutral or even negative in its effect on resolution.

The nature of professional recruitment may be viewed as a resource for the handling of conflict, although some might argue that it is not worth the price. To the extent that the superintendent, his staff, and teachers share the community's values because of a selective recruiting program, they are unlikely to introduce unwanted change unless forced to do so. Even in the case of innovations that are demanded by a state or Federal agency, the image of the superintendent as one who shares the community's concerns may mean that change he introduces will be accepted even if it is not really liked because he himself is trusted. As one who understands the feelings and prejudices of his constituents, such a superintendent may be better able to judge when to introduce a given change, when to push it, and when to retreat to fight another day. He may also, of course, simply side with the community against the outside agency and thus harden resistance to the proposed innovation, even if all concerned are aware that eventually it will have to come.

The fact that these communities tend to be politically conservative, instead of radical, has some implications for the resolution of conflict as well. Unless the individual moves toward the extremes of political conservatism, the philosophy itself includes a high emphasis on law abiding as a value, even when one disagrees with the law. American culture is rather notorious for the failure in practice to live up to its high and frequent preachments on what it means to be a nation of laws rather than of men. But if any group is likely to truly hold this as a philosophy to be practiced as well as preached, it is the moderate conservative. (There is, of course, the one major

exception to this statement just discussed--race relations. At this point many conservatives are willing to part with their value of the law in order to uphold racial segregation.)

There is another value that one might suggest is not an unfamiliar one to the type of conservative philosophy found in small town America, and that is a certain respect for expertise. At least, there is an ambivalence. One might not like what a person does, but one is supposed to admire any job well done and any person who has the ability to learn to do a complex job well. In such manner the professional staff of the schools are considered to be educated experts. This fact may be employed by the school official as a resource in convincing a community to accept some change in the school.

Finally, it should be noted that there are some resources unlikely to be found in the small community that, were they to exist, might help in resolving conflicts among factions in the community or help the school in its attempt to preserve its professional autonomy.

If the conclusions of the Minar[18] study are correct, then the type of social skills that go with conflict management is unlikely to be present in the small or rural community. These are skills of the other-directed, educated and professional person, not of the inner-directed, small town businessman or farmer. The kind of conflict that involves large factions in the community is thus apt to come to the overt stage rather than to be settled informally by competing interests. It might be suggested that open conflict seems less apt to result in compromise than would be true of informal bargaining. One side may be more apt to win and the other to lose.

Another quality that is really associated with a highly educated group, and thus is apt to be lacking in the small community, is a tolerance for difference. When one is sure that one is right, then there is little reason to tolerate a different view. In many cases conservative Americans, and this means rural America, are quite sure they have a rather final understanding on truth and values. The potential for conflict is correspondingly high, and the resources for compromise are lacking.

A resource that often helps the school, or any such organization, in the more urban setting is the fact that when there are various factions that have different ideas about the solution of a problem, the school can act more independently than it can when faced with a unified opposition. Factions can be "played off" against each other. The fairly homogeneous rural community is less likely to supply such competing factions than is the rather heterogeneous larger community. Consequently, the school may enjoy less freedom to act in the small community.

There is also the resource of the possibility of anonymity in decision-making. The small community provides less shelter in this sense than does the urban setting, either within the school structure itself, which is apt to be fairly small, or in the town's decision-making structure. Consequently, unpopular decisions are more apt to be associated with the person making them, and this may well retard action on controversial issues.

Finally, let us move from looking at conflicts among community members that involve the school to considering the place of the school per se in the power relationships. Using Corwin's five possible responses of the school to its power environment as a basis for discussion it would seem important to again make note of the high emphasis in the literature on the existence of a power elite in small communities. If this existence be true, then some of the options suggested may be more realistic than others.

Passive adaptation is probably one of the most common responses. With a definite power structure it is relatively easy to anticipate the positions that are likely to be taken and to organize the school so as to meet those preferences. This keeps overt conflict to a minimum and may build the school in the favor of the power structure. It is possible, although doubtful, that one could consider this a source of building up credits with the power structure so that on an issue of great importance the school would be in a position to draw on past favors.

The existence of a monolithic power structure, however, virtually eliminates the alternative of a coalition on questions of economic importance. There are, by definition, no other groups with which one could cooperate to get around the power structure. The only real possibility here, and its chances of success may be questionable, is to build a group from the public at large that is very concerned about the school. Possibly even a power structure might give some consideration to a large group of its townspeople.

Coalitions may be possible on issues such as curriculum change when no omnipotent group is terribly concerned with the outcome. Civic clubs, lodges or fraternities, veterans groups, or religious groups are all political allies--although it is even more likely that they are potential enemies.

Again co-optation assumes that there are other meaningful groups, the leaders of which can be co-opted. It might be possible to co-opt even with a member of the power elite, although unlikely. There are, however, groups, such as the PTA, that are vulnerable to this type of endeavor even in the small community. While these groups may not be of the equivalent stature of businessmen, the groups can be useful especially on some of the less crucial issues.

Bargaining is a possible response of the small town school to its setting. For instance, school officials may bargain in the sense that they are willing to give up pushing for some goal, such as an expanded curriculum in one area, in return for support for the right of the teacher to present alternative viewpoints in a class that already exists. There always exist some resources, if sparingly used, that can be spread to gain new goals.

Corwin's last suggested response is outright competition. If the school existed in isolation in the small community, competition would not be a likely possibility. The fact that the small community has ties with the larger community and support from some outside professional associations means that if the superintendent and those who work under him are interested and willing, they have a meaningful chance to compete on those issues in which the larger society is

concerned. On issues such as integration, they not only stand a fair chance of competing, in the long run the larger society is almost sure to win.

The final question of how well the school in rural and small town areas can operate professionally and move to improve educational opportunities for its students would seem to rest in large part upon its will to do so. It may well be that such areas take care to recruit those who do not have this will. That can be a major obstacle. Beyond that it will take a certain amount of sophisticated understanding of the resources available from outside of the community along with a sympathetic understanding of community values and a willingness not to be too abrasive. But change can come. In many cases it would seem that it will come whether wanted or not.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Neal Gross, Who Runs Our Schools (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1958).

[2]Floyd Hunter, Community Power Structure (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953).

[3]Robert Lynd and Helen M. Lynd, Middletown (New York: Harcourt-Brace, 1929).

[4]Arthur J. Vidich and Joseph Bensman, Small Town in Mass Society (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., Anchor Books, 1958).

[5]William H. Form and Warren L. Sauer, Community Influentials in a Middle Sized City (East Lansing, Michigan: Institute for Community Development, 1961).

[6]For one such review of the literature that includes a good listing of the bibliography see Stephan P. Hencley, "The Study of Community Politics and Power," The Politics of Education in the Local Community, ed. Robert S. Cahill and Stephen P. Hencley, (Danville, Illinois: The Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc., 1964).

[7]Roland J. Pellegrin, Community Power Structure and Educational Decision-Making in the Local Community (Eugene: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1965), p. 2.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., p. 6.

[10]Roland J. Pellegrin, An Analysis of Sources and Processes of Innovation in Education (Eugene: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1966), pp. 10 & 9.

[11]Ibid., p. 11.

[12]Ibid., p. 13.

[13]Keith Goldhammer, Issues and Strategies in the Public Acceptance of Educational Change (Eugene: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1965).

[14]Ibid., p. 5.

[15]Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[16]Ralph B. Kimbrough, Political Power and Educational Decision-making (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1964), p. 200. It might be worth noting at this point that Kimbrough's conclusions are based in large part on inference from the studies rather than direct data on educational decision-making.

[17]Ronald G. Corwin, A Sociology of Education (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965).

[18]David W. Minar, "The Community Basis of Conflict in School System Politics," American Sociological Review, XXXI (December, 1966), pp. 822-835.

[19]Corwin, op. cit., p. 366.

[20]Ibid., pp. 385-386.

[21]Ibid., p. 388.

[22]Ibid., p. 409.

[23]Ibid., p. 413.

[24]Minar, op. cit., p. 833.

[25]Ibid., p. 827.

[26]Sam D. Sieber, "Organizational Influences on Innovative Roles," Knowledge Production and Utilization in Educational Administration, ed. Terry L. Eidell and Joanne M. Kitchel (Eugene: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1968), p. 124.

[27]Census figures cited in Lee Taylor and Arthur R. Jones, Jr., Rural Life and Urbanized Society (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 27.

[28]Vidich and Bensman, loc. cit.

[29]James West, Plainville, U.S.A. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945).

[30]Taylor and Jones, op. cit., p. 23.

[31]Vidich and Bensman, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

[32]Raymond W. Mack and Dennis C. McElrath, "Urban Social Differentiation," Social Problems: Persistent Challenges, ed. Edward C. McDonagh and Jon E. Simpson (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965), p. 4.

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37 Gross, loc. cit.